THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

HEREDITY IN OPHTHALMOLOGY—Jules François, Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Ghent, Belgium. Translated from the French Edition entitled *L'Hérédité en ophtalmologie.* The C. V. Mosby Company, 3207 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, 1961. 731 pages, with 629 figures including 6 in color, $23.00.

Interest in genetics is relatively new in the United States, perhaps, in part, as the result of being a new country where the population shifts a good deal. Because of this, long family trees are rarely available. However, in recent years the genetics of ophthalmology has interested a number of ophthalmologists. For the serious student of heredity in ophthalmology, a good standard textbook has not been available.

"The Heredity in Ophthalmology" by François, which is a translation of the book as published in French in 1958, answers this need. The book has been written in the thorough, painstaking and exhaustive manner that characterizes all of François' publications.

The importance of genetics in ophthalmology is brought out in the preface in which François states: "To believe genetics is a barren science is a grave error." He points out that in 1944 congenital and hereditary abnormalities alone were responsible for more than two-thirds of the cases of blindness in the schools for the blind in England.

The book, comprised of 43 chapters, is divided into four major parts. In the first part, on general genetics, the elementary concepts of general science are reviewed. This includes the different types of heredity (dominant, recessive and sex-linked inheritance); chromosomal abnormalities, mutation; variations in the phenotypic manifestations of a gene; dimerism and polymerism; polyallelism and environment. The discussion of the elements of statistics and biometry conclude this part.

The second part deals with genetics in ophthalmology. The importance of heredity in ophthalmology is brought out by the fact that there are at least 246 pathological genes known which express themselves in ocular abnormalities, either exclusively or associated with other abnormalities. The chapter on the preventative management of hereditary ocular diseases before and after marriage is of special practical interest.

Part three consists of a discussion of the hereditary diseases involving all the various structures of the eye. This part is comprised of 18 chapters.

The fourth and final part of the book is devoted to those hereditary general diseases that show ocular manifestations. These include metabolic disturbances, affections of the central nervous system; skeletal affections; skin diseases; diseases of the blood; diseases of the endocrine glands and arterial hypertension.

The book is a classic and should be in the hands of every ophthalmologist and all serious students of genetics.

The format is outstanding even for a Mosby book. The paper is excellent as is also the typography. The volume contains 629 figures, including diagrams, reproductions of drawings, photographs, and 6 colored plates, all of outstanding quality. There is an author index of 19 pages. The subject index could perhaps have been a little more detailed.

The book is very highly recommended.

FREDERICK C. CORDES, M.D.

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CORONARY VASODILATORS—R. Charlier, Head of the Pharmacology Department, Labaz Laboratories, Brussels. (International Series of Monographs on Pure and Applied Biology. Division: Modern Trends in Physiological Sciences, Volume 10.) Pergamon Press Inc., 122 East 55th Street, New York 22, N.Y., 1961. 208 pages, $8.50.

This is a comprehensive, authoritative review of the clinical pharmacology of a large number of coronary vasodilators. The author assumes that angina pectoris is due to myocardial ischemia from functional insufficiency of the coronary circulation and that therapeutic agents, to be effective, must increase the arterial blood flow in the myocardium by dilating the coronary arteries. He comments that evidence of the long-term beneficial value upon the lesions in atherosclerosis by the reduction of serum cholesterol has not been proved, and that therefore the main place in the treatment of the anginal syndrome must rest with coronary vasodilators.

The author begins by discussing the physiological factors determining coronary flow, and discusses in detail a wide variety of experimental methods designed to measure the changes in lumen in the coronaries. In this section the author includes a great deal of European work which may not be known to the American reader, and this will be of considerable interest. He illustrates how conflicting the data are, and he presents the pros and cons of each method in an unbiased manner.

The major part of the book is concerned with the pharmacological and clinical features of many drugs that either directly or indirectly are said to have vasodilating properties. This section is very comprehensive, including most of the world's literature, and will be of considerable benefit to the general physician who is faced with the use of these drugs. The author indicates the difficulty of evaluating the clinical benefit from the drugs, the need for double-blind techniques, and discusses his own personal experience and views. Although he believes that observations on a drug over a long period of time on many patients are necessary before a sound conclusion of benefit can be made, he favors Greiner's subjective procedure in combination with Riseman's objective method of assessing exercise tolerance under standard conditions.

The broad coverage, the unbiased treatment, the many illustrations and the extensive bibliography (908 references) indicate that this book will be of considerable interest to clinicians as well as to pharmacologists.

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